

Asking our Big God for Big Things, 2 Kings 13:14-19 - Sunday, April 14th 2013

- The Lord has led me in a different direction for this morning, and as such, I'll have you turn to the Old Testament book of 2 Kings 13:14-19.

2 Kings 13:14-19 NKJV Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!" (15) And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So he took himself a bow and some arrows. (16) Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So he put his hand *on it*, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. (17) And he said, "Open the east window"; and he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, "Shoot"; and he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed *them*." (18) Then he said, "Take the arrows"; so he took *them*. And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground"; so he struck three times, and stopped. (19) And the man of God was angry with him, and said, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed *it*! But now you will strike Syria *only* three times."

- Indulge me for just a bit as I explain what went down here in this passage. We begin at the end of Elisha's life, such that he's on his deathbed.
- Upon hearing that Elisha lay dying, Joash, the King of the Northern Tribes of Israel, comes down to visit him, and in so doing begins to weep.
- Elisha, whose seemingly unmoved by this show of pity, responds by telling him to take his bow and some arrows, then he helps him shoot them.
- Being that this was the symbolic gesture of firing arrows towards the enemy's camp, he says you must strike the Syrians until you destroy them.
- After this, Elisha tells Joash to again take the arrows and strike the ground, however, Joash only strikes the ground three times, then, he stops.
- The translation falls terribly short in verse nineteen when it says that Elisha became angry, this because of the meaning in the original language.
- In the original language of the Old Testament Hebrew, the word used for angry carries with it the idea of cracking, or as we might say, snapping.
- In other words, Elisha snapped in fit of rage when he, in effect, tells Joash that he has limited God to giving Israel only three victories over Syria.
- This begs the question of why it is, Elisha would come unhinged over Joash striking only three arrows, when he should have struck double that.
- The reason this is so striking pardon the pun, is that righteous anger on Elisha's part is totally out of character for this even-tempered prophet.
- We know this about Elisha's temperament by virtue of what we see when he was with Elijah, who was arguably the polar opposite of Elisha.
- Elijah was the fiery prophet, and as such, he's the one who not only calls fire down from heaven but he also goes up in a fiery chariot to heaven.
- Elisha, on the other hand, was both patient and gentle, especially with the other prophets, whom God was raising up for the future of Israel.
- This is why Elisha's reaction is so astonishing. It even seems disproportionate to what Joash does, or doesn't do in striking only three arrows.
- After all, at least he will be victorious over Syria three times. Isn't that good enough? Not for Elisha, and the reason it's not is in 2 Kings 2:1-12.

2 Kings 2:1-12 NKJV And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. (2) Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel. (3) Now the sons of the prophets who *were* at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" (4) Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho. (5) Now the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" (6) Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. (7) And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. (8) Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled *it* up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. (9) And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." (10) So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless*, if you see me *when I am taken* from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be *so*." (11) Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. (12) And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces.

- The answer to the question that's still on our table concerning Elisha's reaction to Joash being over the top is found in what Elisha "asks" for.
- Perhaps better said, it's what Elisha doesn't ask for. By that I mean Elisha isn't content to only ask Elijah that he can be half the man he was.
- He doesn't even ask Elijah to be the same man he was rather, he asks for a double portion, to have twice the Spirit of God poured out on him.
- Here's what I'm thinking, Elisha was super sensitive and hyper tenacious to grieving the Holy Spirit and limiting what God desired to do with him.
- To me, this explains why he became so indignant with Joash. Joash limited God, when God would have given him a double portion, as it were.
- One last thing before I share with you why the Lord directed me to this. Elisha asked for a "hard thing," and Elijah didn't assure that he'd get it.
- The reason I point this out is because it will be germane to understanding that which I believe, as your pastor, the Lord would have us to do.
- Simply put, I believe the Lord would have us ask for a hard thing with the hopes that we, like Elisha, may see if it shall be so for us as a church.
- But if not, if it shall not be so then at least we asked. What I am speaking of is we as a church ask God to allow us to buy "The Agape Shoppe."
- Let me explain, it seems that the Lord has presented us with an opportunity to purchase The Agape Shoppe building, as well as the business.
- Let me hasten to say, and I know this may come as a surprise to many; we are not in any way asking for money, we are only asking for prayer.
- The reason being is that God has called mature believers, with the gift of giving, to this church, so much so, that we can pursue this financially.

- The purpose of purchasing this building is not to move the church, rather, it's to have a ministry center, and a ministry outreach for the church.
- I believe that if we would have the vision as a church we could sort of reinvent The Agape Shoppe by starting up a Christian Coffee Shoppe.
- In concert with this we would also have our church office, which means we'd have a place during the week for ministry operation and outreach.

- The problem is that a property such as this, especially in Kailua and on the Windward side, is a "gold mine," and as such there's a very long line.
- I liken it unto a David and Goliath, not in the sense that we would pay a David price for a Goliath gold mine, but that we use it for God's glory.
- Were this property to end up in the hands of some uncircumcised Philistine, there would be no more Christian bookstore on the Windward side.

- If that happened, I would see it as the Goliath of this world being victorious for the kingdom of darkness on land that's for the Kingdom of God.
- I am keenly aware how one might argue that we're a small church, with little strength, and don't stand a chance against the other buyers for it.
- Could it be that, the eyes of the Lord in searching to and fro for hearts fully devoted to Him, has found us that He might be strong on our behalf?

- I'm also aware of how one might argue that we should buy our own church building. Well, does it have to be either or, or a double portion.
- In other words, what if God, like Elisha vis-a-vis Elijah, wants to give us both? Maybe God has this, as well as another building for us?
- I would rather ask for the double portion, twice as much, and have it not be so, than to only fire half the arrows when it could've been so.

- If it is so, or not to be so, at least we asked. Like Elijah said to Elisha, "you have asked a hard thing," but let us at least ask if it shall be.
- Again, we're not asking anyone for money, we're asking everyone for prayer. Let's all ask, seek, and knock on this door of opportunity.
- Whenever you're in Kailua, do a drive by shooting of arrows, metaphorically speaking of course, and let's ask our big God for big things.